

MARSHALL COUNTY

Honorable Howard Hawk

Marshall County Courthouse
P. O. Box 608
Guntersville, AL 35976
(256) 571-7779



Wayne Sellers
Jerry Johnson
Stan Sledge
Janice Creel
Steve Bearden
Debra Seagraves
Rob Sparkman
John Mullins
Leland Dishman
Andy Lee
Barry Kirkland
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Cathy Hughes
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Hinton Mitchem

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James Watkins
Cindy Wigley
Janice Wilson
John Young

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support initiatives for a countywide educational, technical alternative school (not disciplinary)
2. Improve parenting skills and involvement
3. Decrease family dynamic situations of children living with parents/guardians that are using and manufacturing crystal methamphetamine and other illegal narcotic drugs

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Childhood Obesity

Policy Council Action Steps:

- study local statistics to evaluate the scope of the childhood obesity problem in Marshall County
- petition local schools to provide healthy snack options to students.
- participate in local health fairs to promote healthy food and active lifestyle choices

Lack of knowledge concerning healthy, active lifestyles

Policy Council Action Steps:

- utilize local media to provide health information related to childhood issues
- collaborate with established parenting classes to provide health/hygiene education to parents
- participate in Family Life Conference to provide information

Diverse Health issues related to Hispanic children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide Spanish health information for the local Cinco de Mayo festival.
- collaborate with employers in order to provide parents with information related to established providers/benefits available
- work with local Hispanic faith groups to educate the Hispanic community concerning healthy, active lifestyles

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Provide opportunities for safe and meaningful visitation for children at risk of abuse and neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify children in need of supervised visitation.
- develop mechanism for referral to utilize supervised visitation services
- develop strategy to minimize factors contributing to abuse, neglect, or unsafe environments for children

Decrease family dynamic situations of children living with parents/guardians that are using and manufacturing crystal methamphetamine and other illegal narcotic drugs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- to assess nature and extent of substance abuse problems of Marshall County parents
- develop collaborative effort among DHR, court system, and treatment providers for the early identification of substance abusing parents
- to identify, outside of the criminal justice system, parent/guardians subject to addiction

Empower the Marshall County Hispanic community to make safety-wise decisions for themselves and their children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage the use of child-restraint seats and automobile safety-belts through demonstrations and explanations of the benefits of device usage
- promote domestic violence/family violence awareness campaign within the Marshall County Hispanic population
- reduce "Bullying" and prejudice of the Hispanic population by launching an celebrative-informative "Love Your Hispanic Neighbor" Campaign, which will promote community awareness of the cultural background and norms of Marshall County's Hispanic immigrants

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Continue to develop a Resource Data Base for schools and agencies to use for programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- further develop the website
- collect additional information to further develop the speaker's bureau
- advertise this information

Create information sharing session among professionals working with at risk students to encourage students to stay in school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- schedule meeting for professionals to brainstorm ideas
- utilize existing program to encourage school attendance
- investigate the possibility of implementing new, innovative programs to encourage students to stay in school

Notify schools and agencies of grant requirements in order to better adhere to the purposes of the Children's Policy Council

Policy Council Action Steps:

- in writing notify all schools and agencies of the requirements necessary to apply for grants
- notify schools and agencies in writing of the steps necessary to gain grant approval by the education committee

Early Care and

Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Shortage of quality early care/programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- educate the public to recognize and value quality early childhood care/programs with a local and state ad campaign and information distribution
- offer training and professional development to childcare providers and staff
- organize a grass roots effort to educate and to lobby for support from local and state government leaders
- provide incentives for all childcare centers and preschools that obtain standards established for NAEYC accreditation

Lack of parenting skills across all socio-economic groups

Policy Council Action Steps:

- host support group meetings for parents to provide parent education.
- expand Parent Project coordinated by the Marshall County Juvenile Probation Office

Need for fully funded 4-year-old programs in public schools

Policy Council Action Steps:

- express support to state government for further funding of OSR model Pre-K sites throughout the state
- work with LEA, special education administrators and title I parent advisory councils to allocate a percentage of at-risk and early intervention funds for Pre-K programs in public schools

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Increase career/technical education and training for students

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with business to implement job shadowing and training opportunities
- coordinate with local education systems to increase enrollment in career/technical education

Provide employment education and career planning for youth in Marshall County

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide education classes for youth to teach them how to complete applications, how to present for interviews, and other necessary skills to obtain employment
- promote GED classes for students who have already dropped out of school
- provide basic work ethics education for youth

Support initiatives for countywide alternative school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- increase technical training opportunities for students

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Increase number of parenting skills for youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- implement parenting readiness programs as an elective in high school
- identify students who are in need of parental role models.
- make available more family planning information to be provided in health classes

Improve parenting skills and involvement

Policy Council Action Steps:

- increase information regarding the importance of parent involvement to schools, health department, hospitals, and daycares
- make available simplistic information for parent involvement
- identify current policies for other agencies relating to educational role dealing with neglect and accountability

Policy Recommendation

1. Notify each school and agency of the requirements necessary to apply for and receive grant approval from the Education Committee.
2. The state Department of Education should provide additional funding for vocational education in the local education systems.
3. The state Department of Education should require local education systems to provide adequate vocational training
4. The state Department of Human Resources should address policies relating to educational neglect/accountability
5. The state Department of Education should incorporate more family planning in health class curriculum.

